

Vakeisa Johnson is the 21st person to use her North Little Rock Housing Authority Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher to purchase a home.

Pulaski Technical College, several local organizations and new homeowner Vakeisa Johnson recently celebrated the opening of a new home on Marion Street in downtown North Little Rock that was constructed by students in the Pulaski Tech Construction Management Technology and Youth Build programs.

Construction of the home was financed with a donation from Bank of America and a grant from Metropolitan National Bank and the Federal Home Loan Bank of Dallas. Other partners include Argenta Community Development Corporation, City of North Little Rock, North Little Rock Community Development Agency and the North Little Rock Housing Authority.



Dr. Dan F. Bakke, college president, said Pulaski Tech established the YouthBuild program three years ago in conjunction with the college's Construction Technology program to provide students with an opportunity to give back to the community and to offer hands-on training in a variety of construction fields.

In YouthBuild, unemployed and undereducated young people ages 16-24 work toward their GED or high school diploma while learning construction skills by building affordable housing for homeless and low-income people. Strong emphasis is placed on leadership

development, community service and the creation of a positive mini-community of adults and youth committed to success

"The college is not in the real estate business," Bakke said, "so we partner with community organizations such as Argenta Community Development Corporation and the North Little Rock Housing Authority to find families to purchase the homes at an affordable price."

Students already have completed four single-family homes on Alpha Street, 16th Street and Schaer Street in North Little Rock.